

Plate IX

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Young Tuareg woman of noble class brushing her teeth with an irak stem. Notice behind her the mat called asaber used to surround the tent.

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Young Tuareg couple seated in the shelter of the asaber. Behind them is a household servant, a taklit of Sudanese origin.

furniture. These objects are not numerous and reflect the primitive life led by the Tuareg. 352

On the left side of the tent is generally found the goatskin water bag, hung on two wooden stakes placed in a V-shape. An old piece of cloth often covers it to protect it from the sun. The waterskin is often empty, for the Tuareg are not very farsighted. When there is water, they drink; when /229/ they are out of it, they stay there waiting a half day until the Iktan get back from the well. [415
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Fig. 28.
Tent shovel.



When a traveler passes by, he is most generally assailed with demands for water, while he himself often hoped to find some in the camp. [574]

In front of the door and close to all the tents is an enormous wooden mortar and its pestle, in which the servant girl crushes millet and dates. By searching a bit in the tent or in the shelter used as a kitchen, one may find two or three hemispheric wooden dishes destined to hold food and two or three conical bowls serving as drinking vessels. Hanging on one of the outer stakes of the tent are a wooden milking vessel, an esparto winnowing basket for sifting millet flour, serving at the same time as a dish cover, one or two little esparto mats which can serve the same purpose, and finally a few wooden spoons. Each mistress of a tent has a little 412
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232 of the average resources of their country and never let their flocks
[172] exceed the number of head necessary for the milk needs of their
[438] family -- about ten to twelve animals per person. The surplus is
consumed or sold to the sedentary people in the agricultural centers.

233 /253/ The Ahaggar goats give very rich milk which makes
[234] excellent butter. The meat, which is a little tough, is eaten boiled,
[252] and the hide is valued for making saddle bags, waterskins, and
[262] sometimes tents.
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The ass. -- The Ahaggar Tuareg have many asses. They do
not breed them properly speaking, taking no care of them and letting
[232] them reproduce freely. Many Tuareg do not know the exact num-
[422] ber of asses they have, for they do not use them all and abandon
them in the mountains where they become more or less wild. The
young ones, born in the meantime, do not let anyone get near them,
and they must be trapped and then trained in order to be used.

137 These asses running loose, called haoulil by the Ahaggar Tuareg,
have given rise to a legend of wild asses. On this subject, Gautier
cited the adventure of General Laperrine who had a "wild" ass
hunted by his Arab horsemen, only to notice later that the animal
had been castrated.

Although there are no more wild asses in the Ahaggar, it is
[172] nearly certain that there were some. They were pictured in the
rock drawings of the Djorat wadi, and some still exist in Abyssinia
where they are called "onager."

233 The ass is very much at home in the Ahaggar. It is possible
[174] that it was domesticated there. The legends of the Ihaggaren have
[173] kept the memory of the first inhabitants, the Issebeten, who had
only asses and goats.

44 In their short moves the Tuareg utilize asses to transport baggage,
and men and women also use them as mounts. The servants also
[312] take asses to replenish the water supply, making them carry the
[357] heavy waterskins on their backs or under their bellies.

A married woman has possessions independent of those of her husband. Her camels bear her special mark, different from that of her husband. She does not take part in household work unless she wishes to do so. 422
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She has the right not to follow her husband immediately after her marriage, but to camp near the tent of her parents for a year after her union, so that she can accustom herself gradually to the idea of separation. 562
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To obtain a divorce, it is enough for her to refuse herself to her husband and to take refuge with her parents. 586

Almost all women, except the poor, have meharis as mounts and their individual saddles. 422
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At the ahal, as we have seen, she rules as mistress.

Noble or serf, she has one or more negresses reponsible for the heavy work of the household and for the preparation of food. 357
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It is she who is the more educated, for she knows better than her husband how to write and read the "tiffinagh's" (names of the characters of Tamashek writing), and it is she who teaches her children to read. 212
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She plays the amz'ad, the instrument for which the Tuareg have such a lively predilection. "When two groups come to blows and one of them is defeated, the victors cry to the vanquished this wild cry peculiar to the Tuareg: /13/ 533
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'Hia! hia! hia!

'So there will be no amz'ad!'

"At the threat of the silence of the 'imz'aden' the vanquished return to the charge, so great is the fear of the women's unfavorable opinion." (Duveyrier).

Nothing gives the Tuareg as much pleasure as for one to be interested in the deeds and ways of the women of their tribes. Thus one has only to speak of Dassine or of Mellouka, women who enjoy a great reputation for beauty and intelligence in the Ahaggar, to see a stiff attitude give way to great good humor. 521
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The negroes and negresses are well treated by the Tuareg, 563
who do not impose hard labor upon them. The negroes are pri-567
marily busy with the flocks, which they drive to pasture and water. [233]
The negresses are concerned with the kitchen; they go after [357]
water and take care of the children.



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Tuareg Watering their Sheep at the Tin Zaouaten Well

Negroes and negresses also gather the harvest of "toulloult" and "afezzou" grains, but this is more fun than work, for everyone takes part in it with them, in gay groups.

Many negroes eventually become the trusted men of their masters, who put them in charge of caravans or even of responsible missions. Thus, the amenokal Moussa had a trusted negro, Chernach, whom he regarded highly, for, he said, "I know that this man would have himself killed for me." Moreover, he gave him a gun, a spear, and a saber. /33/ These negroes are very happy and can consider themselves as freed.